

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 INT-05 /085 W
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R 271011Z JUN 75
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2402
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK
SUBJECT: THE LEFT'S REVENGE - YORKSHIRE MINERS THREATEN
TO WITHDRAW "SPONSORSHIP" FROM RECALCITRANT LABOR MP'S;
AND REG PRENTICE ALSO FACES "PURGE"

SUMMARY - THE THREAT BY YORKSHIRE MINERS TO WITHDRAW SUP-
PORT FROM FIVE OF THEIR "SPONSORED" LABOR MP'S, INCLUDING
DEFENSE SECRETARY ROY MASON, UNLESS THEY SUPPORT UNION
POLICY HAS KICKED UP A SMALL STORM IN PARLIAMENT. A
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RULING BY SELWYN LLOYD, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

WILL BE MADE LATER TODAY (JUNE 27) TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE ACTION OF THE YORKSHIRE AREA COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINERS INVOLVED A BREACH OF PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE. THE FIVE MP'S REJECTED THE UNION'S "COOPERATE OR BE PURGED" ULTIMATUM, AND JOE GORMLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINERS, HAS REPUDIATED THE YORKSHIRE MINERS' ACTION. (IN A SIMILAR, THOUGH NOT RELATED MOVE, LEFT-WINGERS IN HIS NEWHAM NORTH-EAST CONSTITUENCY ARE LEADING A DRIVE TO FORCE REG PRENTICE, OUTSPOKEN LABOR MODERATE, TO RETIRE AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION.)
END SUMMARY.

1. THE YORKSHIRE MINERS' SECTION MET ON WEDNESDAY AND OVERWHELMINGLY PASSED A CENSURE RESOLUTION AGAINST FIVE LABOR MP'S -- ALL FORMER MINERS INCLUDING DEFENSE SECRETARY ROY MASON -- FOR THEIR PRO-EC STAND DURING THE REFERENDUM AND, IN NEW GUIDELINES, INSTRUCTED THEM NOT TO SPEAK AGAINST UNION POLICY ON OTHER MAJOR ISSUES. ARTHUR SCARGILL, A FORMER COMMUNIST AND CURRENT LEFT-WING MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY WHO IS STILL FREQUENTLY CHARACTERIZED AS A MARXIST BY THE PRESS, DECLARED AFTER THE YORKSHIRE MINERS' DECISION: "WE WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE CAN NO LONGER TOLERATE A SITUATION WHERE SPONSORED MP'S OPPOSE OFFICIAL UNION POLICY".

2. THE PRACTICE OF "SPONSORSHIP" OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES BY UNIONS DATES FROM THE PERIOD WHEN WORKERS COULD NOT AFFORD TO STAND FOR PARLIAMENT. THE CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE IS FOR UNIONS TO TRANSMIT SUCH FUNDS TO THE CONSTITUENCY PARTY COFFERS. THE MORE IMPORTANT EFFECT OF UNION SPONSORSHIP, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT MEANS THE UNION WILL SUPPORT ITS SPONSORED CANDIDATES WHEN OFFICIAL NOMINATIONS ARE MADE BY THE PARTY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES -- OR CONVERSELY, WITHDRAW SUPPORT.

3. THE YORKSHIRE ACTION WAS REPUDIATED BY JOE GORMLEY, THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINERS, WHO ECHOED A STATEMENT MADE EARLIER BY MR. MASON THAT IT WAS THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND NOT THE YORKSHIRE SECTION WHICH DECIDED SPONSORSHIP. GORMLEY ALSO STRESSED THAT A MEM-

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BER OF PARLIAMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE NOT ONLY TO HIS UNION BUT TO HIS ENTIRE CONSTITUENCY. THE RULING TODAY ON WHETHER PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE HAS BEEN BREACHED IS IMPORTANT, AND WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION A STATEMENT BY SCARGILL THAT "THE MINERS ARE ENTITLED, BY VIRTUE OF THEIR SPONSORSHIP, TO TELL THEIR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT WHICH WAY TO VOTE". HE ADDED, "THEREFORE THE MP'S CANNOT ENJOY THE PRIVILEGES OF SPONSORSHIP AND THEN DEMAND THE

LUXURY OF INDEPENDENCE". IF A BREACH OF PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE IS FOUND TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE, SCARGILL COULD BE SUMMONED TO THE BAR OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TO EXPLAIN HIS ACTION.

4. THE POST-REFERENDUM WRATH OF THE LEFT IS ALSO REFLECTED IN AN EFFORT BY LABOR PARTY LEFT-WINGERS TO "PURGE" THE OUTSPOKEN MODERATE, REG PRENTICE (CURRENTLY MINISTER FOR OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT). LEFT-WINGERS HAVE BEEN FURIOUS WITH PRENTICE FOR A NUMBER OF HIS STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS, INCLUDING HIS IMPLICATION SOMETIME AGO THAT SOME UNIONS WERE "WELSHING" ON THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, FOR HIS

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OPPOSITION TO THE FREEING OF THE "SHREWSBURY" PICKETS, FOR HIS PRO-EC POSITION DURING THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, AND FOR WHAT THEY ALLEGE IS HIS SUPPORT FOR A COALITION GOVERNMENT. (HE HAS IN FACT DENIED THAT HE FAVORS A COALITION GOVERNMENT. PRIVATELY HE HAS TOLD US THAT HE FAVORS MULTI-PARTY COOPERATION, BUT HE DID NOT COMPLETELY RULE OUT A COALITION GOVERNMENT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.)

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5. PRENTICE'S POLITICAL FATE WILL BE DECIDED AT A SPECIAL CONSTITUENCY MEETING ON JULY 23 WHICH WILL DISCUSS WHETHER HE SHOULD BE FORCED TO RETIRE AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF THE OVERSEAS MINISTER TOLD US THAT PRENTICE WOULD BE CANVASSING HIS CONSTITUENCY FOR SUPPORT, BUT THAT THERE WAS A SERIOUS DANGER THAT THE ANTI-PRENTICE CAMPAIGN MAY SUCCEED. IF, ULTIMATELY, HE WERE FORCED TO RETIRE FROM HIS OWN CONSTITUENCY, OUR SOURCE BELIEVES IT IS LIKELY THAT PRENTICE WILL BE CO-OPTED IN ANOTHER CONSTITUENCY.

6. PRENTICE MAY BE CONSIDERED A SPECIAL CASE IN THAT HE HAS INCURRED THE WRATH NOT ONLY OF THE EXTREME LEFT FOR HIS MODERATE VIEWS BUT ALSO OF MEN LIKE JACK JONES, WHO WAS VERY IRRITATED, IN PARTICULAR, BY WHAT HE BELIEVES IS PRENTICE'S SUPPORT OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT, AND -- AMONG OTHER SINS -- BECAUSE HE SUSPECTS THAT PRENTICE FAVORS A STATUTORY INCOMES POLICY. BUT YORKSHIRE MINERS RESOLUTION WOULD APPEAR, ON ITS FACE, TO BE A BLATANT FORM OF COERCION. IF IT WERE TO SUCCEED, WITHOUT HINDRANCE, IT WOULD ENCOURAGE PUNITIVE ACTIONS AGAINST MP'S IN OTHER AREAS AND WOULD SURELY BE VERY DIVISIVE TO BOTH UNIONS AND TO THE LABOR PARTY.

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